TraCS User Group Meeting
Law Enforcement Panel

Representatives from four agencies currently using TraCS shared their experiences and lessons learned.

Lt. Paul Falduto – Kenosha County Sheriff

- Lt. Falduto recommended that once officers are trained in TraCS that they use it as much as possible in order to become proficient. His agency set up a computer lab for training with a workstation and a field unit both in front so that the instructor could demonstrate both aspects to the users. He recommends at least 8 hours of training for the users. Good training is very important to the success of TraCS use. People seemed to pick up TraCS fairly easily.

- It's very important for the agency to have an IS person involved in setting up TraCS for their agency.

- He strongly recommended using WIFI for data transfer (start shift/end shift) if at all possible. It's helpful to have multiple hotspots if possible.

- Make sure that the database server is powerful enough. His department has a SQL server database. He also recommended getting the best laptops possible. He recommends Panasonic Textbooks. It's very important to have a good computer for the office workstation as well.

- Most problems that they've encountered with TraCS have turned out to be user error.

- Especially in the beginning, they had some problems with officers end-shifting so he periodically checked the laptops for forms that were not end-shifted.

- In order to avoid having the laptops be infected by viruses, they do not allow the use of any thumb drives.

- He recommended having someone trained in TraCS have the authority to write policy.

Sgt. Jason Lauby – Town of Rome Police Dept.

- Sgt. Lauby recommended using wireless as well.

- An IS person would have been helpful.

- Having to do a Windows rollback has caused some problems with duplicate citation numbers. Viruses have caused problems as well.

- They are a small agency and did training one-on-one. He agreed that 8 hours of training is needed for users.

Sgt. Jeff Shimetz – West Allis Police Dept.

- So far his department is using TraCS only for crash reporting. They initially had their traffic investigators (3 people) use it who then trained the other officers.

- Their biggest problem was archiving data in Access. They have since gone to a SQL server database which has improved things greatly.

- They use an after-market software for diagramming. Their city GIS unit provided them with bitmaps of the intersections in the cities that officers use as backgrounds when doing the diagram which has made it easier.

Deputy Mike Doeden – Dane County Sheriff

- Currently, his department has TraCS installed in about 30 squad cars. There are a few holdouts of deputies that don't want to use TraCS.

- He stressed the importance of being careful not to get duplicate document numbers.

- They have had problems with user files getting corrupted.

- They have found hit and run crashes to be the most difficult to fill out.

- People really like the replicate function.

- He strongly recommended that agencies develop an interface from TraCS to their mobile data browser (MDB). His agency has an interface to their MDB (Motorola TX Messenger) and is willing to share it with other agencies using the same product.

- Most officer complaints have been about the diagram tool. Deputy Doeden developed roadway diagrams of common intersections and roadway configurations and saved them as bitmaps. These have been loaded on all laptops and can be used by the officers as a starting point for the diagram.

- He has found that when labeling the units in the diagram, if he uses at least two characters (e.g. V1 rather than 1), the text box automatically is the correct size and will not block out the vehicle as easily when placed on top of it.

- His agency is using floppies for start shift/end shift but they are working on going to wireless.

- They are using Pentax thermal printers. The State Patrol has experience using inkjet printers.

- The Madison Police Department's IT staff have developed a notification that comes back to the officer to inform them of what forms were received after they end-shifted. They also have a good SQL server setup.

General Comments

- When setting up citations number banks, use 200 in the 1st bank and 50 in the 2nd.

- Issuing citations through TraCS is faster than paper citations

- Have a way of tracking citation numbers loaded on MDCs.(e.g. Spreadsheet)

- Using thumb drives for End/Start shifts methods on MDC can be an issue if you have other USB devices (scanners, printers) because the other USB devices will cause the Drive letters to change. TraCS requires the same drive letter assigned to the thumb drive.